



# County of Los Angeles CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE

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July 24, 2008

To: Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke, Chair  
Supervisor Gloria Molina  
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Supervisor Don Knabe  
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: William T Fujioka  
Chief Executive Officer

## **SACRAMENTO UPDATE**

### **State Budget Update**

Senate President pro Tem Don Perata announced that the Senate will convene on Tuesday, July 29, 2008 for the purpose of considering AB 1781, the State's Budget Bill. Senator Perata indicated that no other legislation would be considered.

### **Pursuit of County Position on Legislation**

**AB 31 (De Leon)**, as amended on July 1, 2008, would establish the Statewide Park Development and Community Revitalization Act of 2008 and declare legislative intent to make available, upon appropriation, \$400 million in bond funds from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Bond Protection Bond Act of 2006 (Proposition 84) to the California Department of Parks and Recreation (CDPR) to distribute grants to neighborhood and regional park projects in areas of highest need.

The bill would require CDPR to develop a local assistance program for competitive grants to deliver park and recreation opportunities to the most critically underserved communities. A "critically underserved community" would be defined as a community that: 1) has less than three acres of usable parkland per 1,000 residents, or 2) is a disadvantaged community with a median household income less than 80 percent of the

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Statewide average and can demonstrate that the community lacks sufficient park space and recreation facilities.

Eligible Applicants and Use of Funds. Counties, cities, regional park and other districts, joint powers authorities, and specified non-profit organizations would be eligible to apply for these funds. Joint partnership projects between two or more agencies are encouraged to maximize investment of public resources. In addition, an eligible applicant may apply for a grant to develop State-owned park lands if the applicant manages those lands under specified contracts with the State. Specifically, the measure would fund the acquisition and development of parks, recreational areas, and facilities in communities that are underserved with regard to parks. AB 31 would repeal existing authority to use grant funds to pay costs associated with the remediation of toxic material or hazardous substances.

Selection Criteria for Awarding Grants. AB 31 would require CDPR to award grants to projects that: 1) create a new park, a new recreation facility, or new recreational opportunity, 2) serve a critically underserved community, 3) are designed to provide efficient use of water and other natural resources, 4) are completed with the grant award plus any matching contribution, 5) are selected and planned with the active involvement from the public and community-based groups, 6) would provide for public safety and recreational opportunities upon project completion, and 7) would provide adequate operating hours and user fees that accommodate the needs of community residents.

Grant Administration Requirements. The bill would require CDPR to adopt guidelines to implement the grant program and develop a procedural guide for the administration of the program. Additionally, CDPR would offer technical assistance to all applicants for both grant preparation and project development. Grant recipients would be required to encumber grant funds within three years from the date of approval and expend them within eight years from the date of appropriation. AB 31 would allow for 25 percent of the grant amount to be expended for project planning, design, compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act and other incidental costs directly related to construction or acquisition.

### **Impact on County Departments**

Department of Parks and Recreation: The Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) indicates that AB 31 provides an opportunity to compete for significant grant funding for the acquisition, development and refurbishment of critical park, open space, and resource-related infrastructure improvements. According to DPR, the bill would enhance the ability of the Department to fund priority park projects to repair, expand, or create new recreational opportunities at local and regional parks and trails. In addition, the County operates several State-owned park facilities under contract with the State

that would be eligible for grant funds. Furthermore, DPR indicates that these grant funds would provide a source of revenue for acquisition and development projects to address the deficiency in parkland.

Department of Beaches and Harbors: The Department of Beaches and Harbors (DBH) indicates that the unique nature of coastal beaches as regional park facilities is overlooked in AB 31. According to DBH, public beaches which are located in densely populated urban areas are used by large numbers of residents as if they were an urban park. DBH indicates the bill should more broadly define the types of recreational facilities that would qualify for grant funding under the program to include appropriate beach recreational facilities and beach infrastructure improvements.

### Summary

DPR, DBH, and this office are supportive of AB 31, and the amendments cited above. Support for AB 31 is consistent with the April 2007 recommendations of the Infrastructure Task Force and existing County policies to support funding for the acquisition, development, and rehabilitation of parks and recreation facilities and open space; the establishment of new urban parks in the underserved areas of the County; and the inclusion of beaches in the definition of parks for the purpose of qualifying for park funding programs, if beaches are in densely populated urban areas and are used by large number of residents as if they were an urban park. **Therefore, our Sacramento advocates will support AB 31, and seek amendments to include beaches in the definition of facilities for the purpose of qualifying for funding if the beaches are located in, and serve, densely populated urban areas.**

AB 31 is supported by various organizations, including the California Park and Recreation Society, California State Parks Foundation, and the League of California Cities. There is no known opposition. The bill is scheduled for a hearing in the Senate Appropriations Committee on August 4, 2008.

We will continue to keep you advised.

WTF:GK  
MAL:DD:LY:lm

c: All Department Heads  
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